

MICHIGAN SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CURRICULUM, BIRTH – GRADE 12/EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PARENTING PROGRAMS

January 2001 Update

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Early Childhood Consultants



Please welcome Eileen Storer as the new consultant for Early Childhood and Parenting Programs. Eileen begins her position on February 5, 2001 when she replaces Dr. Margaret Goodly. Dr. Goodly left Early Childhood and Parenting Programs in December to pursue other interests. Eileen has ten years teaching experience in Head Start and Public School Preschool and Kindergarten classrooms. She holds MA degrees in Multicultural Education and Educational Anthropology. She is currently working to complete her doctorate through the University of Pennsylvania. Eileen has administrative experience in Head Start and as project leader for the High/Scope-Kellogg training project. "I already know many of you through my work on the High/Scope-Kellogg training project. I look forward to this new opportunity to support your efforts in providing the highest quality early educational experience to Michigan's children and families."

Enhanced Allocations

The Michigan School Readiness Program (MSRP) is in the process of offering a third round of funding for the 2000-2001 program year. As a result of the late date for allocations and applications, many districts did not have the capacity (staff and space) to serve the number of children requested. The MSRP received the largest increase in funding in the history of the program, from 55 million dollars for FY 1999-2000 to 72.6 million dollars for FY 2000-2001. Districts who have the need and capacity to serve more children should contact Teresa Reed at (517) 241-4288 or Connie Robinson at (517) 241-4291.

Changes in the Mid Year Report (2000-2001)

Enclosed with this mailing are the newly revised forms and instructions for completion of the Mid Year Report. This report is due March 1, 2001. The information required by the Michigan legislature and criteria established by the State Board of Education is important to the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation as they continue to research the effectiveness and quality of the Michigan School Readiness Program. The MSRP evaluation is fundamental in the determination of continued and/or increased funding. Please review the instructions carefully and report factually. Information collected on the Mid Year Report is not used by the Department of Education to determine future funding for your district/agency. Enclosed for your review is *Points of Light: Third Year Report of the Michigan School Readiness Evaluation Executive Summary*. Please contact your consultant with any questions.

Grant Readers Needed

Professionals in the field are always needed to read and evaluate early childhood grant proposals. Copies of competitive proposals will be mailed to readers with reader sessions to follow. If you are interested in this professional development opportunity, please continue to check our web site at: <http://www.state.mi.us/mde/off/staa/earlychild/index.htm>

The Outdoor Learning Environment

The Division of Consumer and Industry Services (DCIS) has changed enforcement of rules pertaining to playgrounds. Carole Hakala Engle, Director of the Bureau of Regulatory Services, prepared the following statement regarding the changes. "Effective immediately R 400.51175 (5) I is being applied to new playgrounds and new equipment being installed on existing playgrounds. As new centers are licensed, or as existing centers install new equipment, the equipment must comply with the Playground Equipment Safety Act referenced in the rule. Currently licensed centers will not be required to change current playground equipment solely for the purpose of meeting the Playground Equipment Safety Act. Of course the requirement that the outdoor play area be safe remains. In the very near future, I will send a letter to child care center licensees informing them of this application."

Difficult Behaviors

Preschool children who have circumstances in their lives that place them "at-risk" of educational failure may also have difficulty demonstrating acceptable social behaviors. It is important for the teaching team to consider the Physical Learning Environment, The Daily Routine, and most importantly Adult-Child Interaction when working to support children who exhibit extreme behaviors indicative of the stressors in their lives. The difficult behaviors of a child whose feelings are acknowledged, has an authentic relationship with a supportive adult and is able to make choices throughout the day will begin to improve. There are many training opportunities available as we work to support children who are demonstrating more severe anxieties, oftentimes mistakenly diagnosed as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Please refer to *Conference, Workshop and Training Opportunities* in this Update.

Our Goals For Children

Keeping in mind the characteristics of preschool-age children can be difficult under the pressures of primary-level program expectations, MEAP test scores, and a host of other variables. Posting the developmental characteristics of the preschool child for daily reference and referral can be tremendously helpful. The teaching team's response to parents, colleagues and administrators who may have questions regarding the rationale for the curriculum is validated by referral to the characteristics of the child. As teaching teams develop daily plans and goals, a review of the characteristics listed below will help keep the needs and capabilities of the children as the focus.

- Egocentrism
- Preoperational, concrete thinking
- Limited verbal skills
- Physical expressiveness
- Exploration of independence and control
- Holds one or two attributes in mind

What are the goals for children exiting the Michigan School Readiness Program? Not many would disagree with the descriptors most frequently selected by teaching teams when asked this question. We want children to be:

- Intelligent
- Self-confident
- Socially well-adjusted
- Creative
- Persistent
- Independent

Continuous review and revision of daily practices assure that children are, in fact, being provided the real life meaningful experiences and adult support necessary to attain these goals. Many entities offer training specific to the implementation of high-quality preschool programs. The findings of the Mid Year Report, and completion of the *Program Quality Assessment Tool (PQA)*, should be used to determine systematic ongoing professional development specific to any area of the *PQA* where scores were less than high quality (below a 4.5).

Important Dates

For State Aid Michigan School Readiness Programs

- Community Needs and Resources Assessment is due February 15, 2001.

For Competitive Michigan School Readiness Programs

- Grant Application is due May 30, 2001.

For Full-Day Services for Michigan School Readiness Programs and Head Start Programs

- Application is due February 1, 2001.
- Reader Session is February 22, 2001.

Technical Assistance Workshops

Technical assistance sessions will be offered in late April and early May for:

- Michigan School Readiness State-Aid (for new folks)
- Michigan School Readiness Competitive Grant
- Even Start
- School-age Child Care
- Three-Year-Old Competitive Program

Information on these technical assistance workshops will be available on a future date at our website at:

<http://www.state.mi.us/mde/off/staa/earlychild/index.htm>

Conference, Workshop and Training Opportunities

The Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children (MiAEEYC) Early Childhood Conference will be held at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel and Grand Rapids Convention Center, Grand Rapids, March 29-31, 2001. For more information, call (888) 666-2392.

Michigan Literacy Progress Profile (MLPP): Check with your local ISD to see if training is being offered in your area or a neighboring ISD.

Reaching The MSRP Staff

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Please do not hesitate to contact the Early Childhood and Parenting Programs at (517) 373-8483 with any questions!

FAX number: (517) 335-0592

"Exercise and recreation... are as necessary as reading. I will rather say more necessary, because health is worth more than learning." Thomas Jefferson